Ex-WP candidates starting new party

Opposition veteran Ng Teck Siong and lawyer Chia Ti Lik seek to register Socialist Front

By Kor Kian Beng

FORMER Workers’ Party (WP) electoral candidates Ng Teck Siong and Chia Ti Lik are setting up a new political party ahead of the next general election.

It is called Socialist Front.

The duo heads a list of 10 names who filed an application last month with the Registry of Societies to register the new opposition party.

If the registration is given the nod, the Socialist Front will be the fourth political party for Mr Ng, 69, who had contested in two general elections: in 1988, he was an SDP candidate in the Thomson single-seat ward, and in 1997, he stood as a WP candidate in West Coast GRC.

Mr Ng left the WP in 2001 with opposition veteran J.B. Jeyaretnam, known popularly as JB, and who died of heart failure in September 2008 – two months after he had founded the Reform Party.

Mr Ng led the party as chairman till April last year when he quit following a spat with Mr Kenneth Jeyaretnam, JB’s elder son, who took over as secretary-general.

Mr Kenneth Jeyaretnam, 51, had said in an interview that the party was “drifting” and “rudderless” for a few months before he assumed leadership.

Mr Ng, a close ally of JB for many years, took to the Speakers’ Corner to give his side of the story.

Meanwhile, there is hardly any new development at the USD, which has links with the SDP. The USD’s president Narayanasamy Gogelavany was an SDP candidate in Sembawang GRC in the 2006 polls, and its secretary Jaslyn Go is a regular at SDP events.

Commenting on the new move, political observer Eugene Tan said opposition unity could be threatened because, with more players in the opposition scene, it may be harder to avoid three-cornered fights.

Added Mr Tan, a Singapore Management University law lecturer: “Voters may feel they have more options but the real question is whether the new parties do present a real difference.”